THINGS UNCERTAIN

HENRY B. HARRIS CHATS OF SUCCESSES AND FAILURES.

Profits From Good Plays Large-Little Chance for the Unknown Playwright -Grubstaking Human Talent and Educating the Theatre Audience.

Henry B. Harris, the theatrical manawno is the owner of the Hudson and ckett theatres and is interested in many matic enterprises, admits that there times when he is a little at see in reto the playwriting problems preal venture of importance was the nagement of Robert Edeson in "The of Fortune," by Richard Harding vis. the dramatization of which was by Augustus Thomas. This was a

than I if it turns out to be a big box once and success. That Mr. Harris has absolutely no jaundiced view of life brought about by his failurs he explains in part by pointing out that taking fi e years to be a big box oncess. That Mr. Harris has absolutely no jaundiced view of life brought about by his failurs he explains in part by pointing out that taking fi e years by Irwin. My father and his partner. Rice, had had several controversies relation to this, Mr. Rice contending it it was perfectly absurd to make a red Miss Irwin, and there were moments and my father appeared to be weaken. Up to that time, ' he says, "the one peak a dramatic enterprise called 'The n my father appeared to be weaken-

"The Christian Pilgrim, which I placed a few years ago on the stage, had a big moral uplift as well as the m ntal things that count. Henrietta Crosma played in it with a support of 129 people and the staging, done by Maurice Campbell. exceeded in magnificence and artistic work anything I have ever been interested in financially, but the public didn't want it and I lost \$60,000.

"Something was lacking, or perhaps it had a religious teaching which the people were not quite ready for. That they are ready for it now fr m the stage is proved by the two successes "The Passing of the Third Floor Back' and "The Servant in the House," both of them sermons, not drama.

"All was just pertinacity enough to believe that in spite of its initial failure there is something in it that will signify there is something in it thad to leave a play reader of all to var in cold blood two or thre

"The Servant in the House," both of them sermons, not drama.

"My play "The Struggle Everlasting' was the pioneer of these, and while I made nothing from it I have the inner satisfaction of believing that I paved the way for the successes I have named. Next sea*on I intend to put on a very ideal play by Percy Mackaye called "The Scarecrow," and I am putting it on although no one will be more surprised than I if it turns out to be a big box office success."

so you can approximate what a play like 'The Lion and the Mouse,' 'The Trav



HENRY B. HARRIS IN HIS OFFICE.

eling Salesman.' "The Chorus Lady' or I think your father's crazy. Henry, wish I could get out of the business, at really mean you would sell your st.' I asked. 'Sell it,' he responded; at I would, if I could find any one I t means that I had on the road the second set I would in I could find any one I wish I could get out of the business." owned a one-third - interest and at he would consider \$2,500 a fair

Henry? You don't happen to have you so lying about, do you?' Then laughed some at the idea. nd he said: 'Why are you so inter-

Henry? You don't happen to have 1,000 lying about, do you? Then 2,000 lying about, do you? Then 2,000 a week, approximately. 'Strongheart' had three companies the second season and 'The Third Degree' has five at present, all playing to good houses. 'A sked when he finally makes up his mind that a play is a failure, Mr. Harris says that his conclusion is not drawn from the modesty that no small part 2,500 represented the savings I made from a small salary, for from the ent when I commenced with a ly wage of \$8 I put one of the eight in the savings bank. I made \$33,000 seasons, besides my salary as ger, with "The Widow Jones."

When I see the receipts steadily falling on beyond the limit of common sense. I want to preserve a temperate mean between those two conditions. "When I see the receipts steadily falling off and theatre chairs yawning drearily night after night I accept the situation, were though the ambitious star and author condemn my so-called hasty action. I hung on four weeks before "The Lion and the Mouse' made good." I have no pet superstitions or masthat he was completely thunderstruck, of the \$5,500 represented the savings I had piede from a small sclary, for from

s aird impeachment with a smile and shout showing any wrinkles of past serv on his smooth face or any trace of time anxiety in his blue eye.

Eight addres, he repeats, drumming fifly with his finger tips on the desk star, that's quite a record, lan't it? ter a play has gone by the board I down and think it all over of course d say, here is the weak point and that is the fundamental reason; but before a see it in the flesh it seems impossible gadge a play's merits.

for a year or two, reading the script, discussing it, changing and ring it, and then afterward seeing the article in the script it is practically in

here, for a year or two, reading the manuscript, discussing it, changing and realtering it, and then afterward seeing it at rehearsals, that it is practically impossible to come to an imprejudiced conclusion. I do not be leve that there is any one living who can judge a play for the publi- accurately. It is our object to develop novel themes, to look at old questions from a new angle, but whether we have succeeded in this or not we cannot tell until the play settles down after the first night to its run and the box office talks."

Mr. Harris is asked to give his idea of why "The Next of Kin," which seemed to answer the requirement of a novel theme, did not answer expectations.

"I believe the reason is this," he says after a mement's thought, "because the main thing which the girl was fighting for wasn't a great, big human thing after all, although I didn't realize that until after the smoke cleared away.

"In "The Lion and the Mouse' the girl was fighting for her father's honor and his life as well; in "The Third Degree' she was fighting for something even dearer and nearer, her husband's life, but in The Next of Kin' she was fighting prace analy for nothing but money, cold, hard erain, even though there was a love interest involved, and the bigness of the theme, showed by holding up the delays involved in litigation, was not sufficient to interest deeply. You must have that human appeal or else make people laugh so that they have to hold on to their chairs for fear of falling off.

"Every bit of money I make," Mr. Harris goes on, taking a zigzag path for a moment. "I invest in dramatic enterprises, and I always intend to place my money where I make it. The Hudson Theatre was purchased with 'The Lion and the Mouse' money, and having degrees the mortgage obligations on my playhouses every year and squared my party "odest living expenses I expect to put on productions that I like, which I firmly believe are necessary for the proper development of the public taste and which I hope will be successes financially, b

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reader can fool you. He is hypnotized by his own enthusiasm and he hypnotized by his own enthusiasm and he hypnotizes you as well.

"Augustus Thomas is one of the best play readers I know. Elmer Harris is good and so is Leo Ditrichstein. You have to look out for those men. Sometimes I ask a playwright to read his work over two of even three times before I am satisfied, and those readings may be supplemented by half a dozen of my solitary perusals followed by those with Mrs. Harris.

"Oftentimes after acceptance I hesitate at productions. Just at the present moment I have a play for which I have paid advance royalties and I cannot for the life of me tall whether to go on with it or not. Its subject is novel and its lesson and conclusions are of ethical value, but in order to present the lesson effectively and to reach the same conclusion of the sex problem there must be certain features of life depicted. The problem to my mind is whether in the general summing up the play justifies that one scene, and I have studied over it for several weeks. This is but one instance of a situation which frequently presents itself, and many a play is refused not because it has no elements of success and a novel theme but because of just that tangle of threads."

Among the theatrical investments Mr. Harris makes from time to time are some in human talent, grubstaking, as one of his assistants terms it. Mr. Harris smilingly admits that while he has done this from time to time so far the result has not justified the expenditure.

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"I have taken chances quite a number

justified the expenditure.

"I have taken chances quite a number of times on an unknown playwright making good." he says. "His idea has pleased me, his enthusiasm and his reputation for industry. I have paid him two or three hundred dollars on the speculation, sometimes more, and after a reasonable time if I find that he is not working out the play to suit me I stop. He is under no obligation to me and I none to him. We have both quit; that is all.

"I know if I got one play out of twenty-five attempts of this kind I should come out ahead and there is no element of philanthropy involved. The wonder to me is that with the millions of investments people make in this direction and that, putting their money in mines with visionary prospectuses, in this and that industrial of which little if anything is actually known, they should pass by year after year the human talent all about them only needing its opportunity and an investment in which might pay 100 per cent. on the capital used.

"Supposing a manager, for example,

vestment in which might pay 100 per cent. on the capital used.

"Supposing a manager, for example, does lose \$60,000 on twenty-four human failures, if he clears \$200,000 on the twenty-fifth why should he complain? If he got that out of a mine he would consider himself the most astute financier of his acquaintance."

THE OLD WAY AND THE NEW What Happened in the Day of Street James

and How Traffic Is Handled Now. You remember," said the old times standing on the curb at Broadway and Canal street and watching the regular and expeditious movement of street traffic over that busy crossing, "you remember what the Frenchman said of the charge of the Light Brigade at Balaklava, that 'it was magnificent, but it wasn't war'! And so we might say of the old time fighting among drivers in the streets of the city before the installation of the present traffic arrangements, that it was red hot, but it wasn't business.

"You know how the old time jams used to start. Driver'd be moseying along through any busy crosstown street, and on the crossing of some busy up and down street he'd meet a driver coming down, and then maybe the driver coming down would think he had the advantage by an inch or two and he'd try to pass in front of the crosstown man, this man keeping right along, though, with no thought at all of giving way.

"The man coming down would get the nose of his horse just past the nose of the horse just past the nose of the cross-town by the cross-town horse off a little, though the cross-town driver would keep holding his course all he could; but the man coming down-town would keep driving ahead, and the first thing you knew the forward wheel on his truck would be locked with the forward wheel on the other, and as they'd both be held up and that was all that was necessary to start an old time jam. On these two trucks, halted, and now more or less slewed around on the crossing, trucks coming from all four directions would begin to bank up, and two minutes later, with a little climbing, you could have walked anywhere around here, from one side of the street to the other on top of trucks or over the barrels and bales and boxes with which they were piled.

"An old time jam, this was, with trucks and horses wedged in together in a jumble that it might take half an hour to straighten out, while traffic on all the streets leading to this crossing was completely tied up.

"See these two steady streams of trucks and wagons passing now, one east, the other west, along the cross street, and all season four companies, and beginning with the one playing in New York it grew into six at the climax of its popularity and now has three companies in the fifth year.

"The Travelling Salesman, James Forbes's clever play, evolved into three companies, and from these during its long run I have averaged between \$5,000 and \$6,000 a week, approximately. "Strong-

pletely tied up.

"See these two steady streams of trucks and wagons passing now, one east, the other west, along the cross street, and all without any cussing or swearing or uproar at all, while north and south, along Broadway, traffic calmly halts, waiting lits turn. A moment later the crossing policeman blows his whistle and instantly the cross currents cease to flow and those in the north and south channel start up.

"Horses as well as drivers know the whistle and there's no delay, and people standing waiting on either side on the curb now confidently pursue their way across the street, for they know that now their way will be blear.

"It's great," the old timer said, "this scientific handling of the traffic in the streets, it surely is. I sometimes wonder if the doing away with the old time fighting, rough and tumble, jams will soften us any, make us tenderer and inclined to be flabby, less heroic; but certainly the present day method does facilitate business." hung on four weeks before "The Lion and the Mouse' made good
"I have no pet superstitions or mascots to help me decide or place stumbling blocks in the path of my resolve. Often in my career as manager I have put on a play on Friday night and have ignored the fact that the 13th of the month and the opening of a new run came together. Some of my plays have had thirteen letters in the title, for instance. The Chorus Lady, 'The Widow Jones,' and many of them have had thirteen characters in the cast. No, I do not believe that superstition is necessary to success any more than a disregard for refinement and morality.

"Another thing I pride myself on is that my office is absolutely free in every way from the effect of influence. People are not put into plays of any kind because

DR. FURNIVALLA WHO CELEBRATED HIS EIGHTY-FIFTR BIRTHDAY BY A THIRTEEN MILE PULL ON THE THAMES.



four strokes to the minute over a course

To keep his bow oar of a four oared student in Trinity Hall, Cambridge. home in fifty minutes. Once on the up trip these new type hell carefully up to the tune of twenty-bur strokes to the minute over a course birthday on February 4. Two days after but that made no difference in the quality time, in 1846. of seven miles, and that in his eighty-fifth that he went out in a four oared shell of the scholar's rowing. year, is no unusual feat for Dr. Frederick with three younger men at the oars with

they were drenched by a passing shower, Clasper, the undefeated champion of his Though Dr. Furnivall's name is best in aquatio sports the first scuiling four

home in fifty minutes. Once on the up trip | these new type racing boats Newell bear

In 1886 and 1887 Dr. Furnivall introduced James Furnivall, M. A., Ph. D., member of the British Academy and for many years started from the clubhouse on the Thames the sole editor of the great Oxford Dictionary. At least Dr. Furnivall does not consider that this is an unusual feat for a veteran oarsman who has kept himself in training since the days when he was a look his place at the bow, and they sculled the ropes. They are some in a connection with his and a woman at the ropes. They him and a woman at the ropes. They him and a woman at the ropes. They known in England in connection with his and sculling eight races. Dr. Furnivall and sculling eight races. Dr. Furnivall sand a sculling led him in 1846 to build with John and the founded the Hammersmith Girls' Soulling boats in England. In a copy of one of Club in 1896.

LIBERTIES WITH NIAGARA

MEN AND A COW WITHOUT RE-SPECT FOR THE CATARACT.

Bossy Simms Hegan by Treating It Like a Trout Stream-The Barrel Navigators-A Meter Boat Race in the Rapids Proposed for This Summer.

NIAGARA FALLS, Feb. 26 .- People with practical minds seem bent on stripping the cataract of Niagara, its rapids and the whirlpool of some of the attributes they have had. There will always be people who will regard as fact the story of the maiden's sacrifice, who will persist in believing that it was a yearly custom of the Indian tribes living in the vicinity of the falls to sacrifice the prettiest maidens of their tribes to the god that was Niagara; the rapids trip in cances and doubtless all went to their death in the journey. So there came from their people extravagant tales of its terrors.

But in 1881 the romances received a severe joit when the engineers got busy and drove part the stream from the Maid of the Mist.

130 and 2:15 A. M., with the tremendous beauty of Niagara set forth under a dazzing moon. He was alrested as he stood at the brink by a policeman.

Then there was Mirs. Anna Edson Taylor.

Who successfully made a trip over the Horseshoe fall in a barrel.

Pretty much the same liberties have been taken with the rapids and the whirlpool. Doubtless many Indians attempted the rapids trip in cances and doubtless all went to their death in the journey. So there came from their people extravagant tales of its terrors.

But in 1881 the romances received a severe joit when the Maid of the Mist.

Sometning of a shock was felt when the stream from the foot of the falls to he cataract of Niagara, its rapids and the lieving that it was a yearly custom of the Indian tribes living in the vicinity of the things have occurred at Niagara to dissipate the romance of the cataract.

thereabout the running ice from Lake

Frie helped by a stiff wind piled the waters

back on themselves and Niagara went

dry at the cataract, and again in April

and women crossed from Prospect Park

to Green Island.

irresistible power.

of last year it was dammed so that men

But even before the engineers and the

last ice dam was Bossy Simms. To her more than any other agency credit is due

for stripping Niagara of its romance of

Bossy Simms was a mere cow, a Dur-

BOSSY SIMMS AT THE BRINK OF NIAGARA.

This was about 1860. This picture of Bossy Simms was taken when she was standing within 100 feet of the brink of the American fall. Soon after the public protest her owner withdrew her to the quiet of a country lot. She had no bovine successors in the park.

But she had an imitator in the person of Amos Schweitzer, a shoemaker of Toronto, Ont., who on June 6, 1906, made a perfect show of the cataract. For fully forty-five minutes he stood in the stream, twenty feet or so from the brink and thirty-five feet out from Prospect Point, his hat cocked over his ear and a cane in his hands, this between 1.30 and 2:15 A. M., with the tremendous beauty of Niagara set forth under a daz-

the engineers got busy and drove part the stream from the foot of the falls to of the river into the factories to turn Lake Ontario with Joel Robinson at the

wheels. People had said it could not be done and when it was done the awe that Niagara inspired was a bit lessened.

Several times natural agencies have taken liberties with the river, have stemmed the mighty current as if it were nothing more than a milirace. In 1848 or liberties that his feat aroused brought to

Niagara other venturesome spirits, most of them barrel navigators, Graham and Hazlett and Potts in the vanguard. All made the trip through the tumble of

made the trip through the tamble of waters without thishap, one among the number a woman, Sadie Allen.

About ten years after the first barrel fleet had sailed through a second fleet came down the river. Of the score that

heat the best up to date stuff in fruitless effort to overcome the editorial 'not quite'?" "Occupation?" smiled the platform

When I am worn to a frazzle traipsing from club to club, flattering stupid womer and stuffing execu mittees with tea and muffins and not single playing date landed!"

"Occupation?" sighed the going to b operatio star. "Haven't I sung my throat hoarse at charitable teas and philanthropic bazaars gratis in hope of securing a church choir position if not a star pupil? And nothing doing!"

"All off!" snapped the pincushion lady "The occupation doctor, I tell you, will save Cuban heels, stamps, carfare, voice box, taxis and do away with bribing with tea and muffins."

The plume of the saucy hat shook. "You think you're up against it. Well, the seven lean months of Holy Writ are table d'hôte compared to the seven lean months that were mine when I set out to convince Gotham that I was a vitalized Whistler. The commissary department was at rock bottom, which means crackers. Gyp, my prize Gyp, had shed her blue ribbons and was in the charity ward of Bide a Wee. Chaos had come, when zeeecept the telephone rang.

"Is this Miss Boggy's studio?"
"It was a bass voice with barytone possibilities.

"I am told you are the eleverest water colorist in New York."

he knew I had dabbled a little in water color.

""Let's see whose work this is," he said turning the catalogue. "Oh, it's a big one—too big for pupils, but I'll find out from the secretary a good teacher."

"In a few days I had your address. You see, it was the doctor. I should never have thought of it. When his mind is made up, it acts. Funny, isn't it?' she with a dash of crimson lake.

"But." concluded the artist, "what's the use of being rich if you can't do as you please with crimson lake or any other old lake," and the needle nose and saucy hat were off. leaving the hard luck party in suspended animation. "You think you're up against it. Well,

colorist in New York " 'None better.'

" 'Good! The best is none too good for my wife. She wants to take less just a few. She's not going in for high art, anything serious, you know. 'How interesting!'

" 'She don't want anything that will work the mind. We have decided on coloring photographs.' " 'Sorry, very busy, every momen aken.'

" 'Of course you're busy. Clever pe always are. Only the incompetent, the neonsequent are idle, out of a job. Ha, " 'Very true,' I replied with a gulp at

the throat. About ten years after the first barrel fleet had sailed through a second fleet came down the river. Of the score that entered for honors only one was killed, a woman who was suffocated in her barrel in the whirlpool through slow work on the part of her supporters on shore. It was even declared that Thomas Kendall, a Boston policeman, swam the rapids in the '80s, but his right to fame has not gone unchallenged.

The coming summer promises unusual things in Nisgara feats. There has already been offered a purse of \$1,000 and a \$500 trophy for a motor boat race through the rapids, the whirlpool and down to Lewiston, where the river broadens to a calm commercial stream. Fifteen adventurers have announced their intention of trying for fame and fortune in the race. It is declared that a motor boat stoutly built and having powerful engines can make the trip without misadventure. Peter Neissen of Chicago a few year's ago went safely through in a small steel craft, suffering only a wetting. The only difficulty that threatens is official interference on one side or the other of the river.

"There won't be anything left to do pretty soon but ewim up the falls," said old Tom Dillon, the dean of hackmen, when told of the projected race.

"Now, what do you want, say for five lessons?"

"Couldn't consider it; too busy."

"You would have to come to the house for my wife."

"I never leave my studio."

"I'll make it worth your while.

"You haven't enough money," and I rang off. Shades of Whistler and all the Old World masters in whose studios I had slaved in the service of art. Tinting photographs!

photographs!
"Again the telephone rang. The bass was now a full fledged barytone in the coaxing stage.
That's for me to judge. Come

"That's for me to judge. Come, name your price."
"Fifty dollars for five one hour lessons." I dropped the receiver, convulsed with laughter dissolved in tears.
"Three days later, when even the crackers had vanished, there was another phone call.
"I accept your terms, said the bees voice. "When may we expect you?"
"Crawling over the wolf at the door I made for the address he gave me. The bass voice emerged from a fat, pompous man. His wife was a frail, ansemic little woman with a collection of college degrees.

THE OCCUPATION DOCTOR

WORDS OF CHEER FOR A HARD
LUCK STORY PARTY.

Physician of the Puture Will Point the
Way to Easy Street for Unrecognized
Talent in Addition to Benefiting His
Patients—Art Prescribed as a Tesic.

"What you young women need is the
accoupation dootor. He will put you on
Easy street. Before you know it you will
be trust advocates and anti-suffrage agitators."

She was a pinchusiony little woman
with a needle nose and a sausy hat. The
hard luck story party had reached the
Dies Iræstage.

"Occupation? I like that," said the
playwright, "when I have run down
two pairs of Cuban heels in daily trampe
for a year to managers' offices and not a
production in sight."

"Occupation? sneered the lady who
writes. "Am I not working over at white
heat the best up to date stuff in fruitless."

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what he would mean in dollars and cents to you, Miss Opera. Can't you see the procession of women he could put under your special method at ten a half hour? And our future Mrs. Pankhurst, don't waste your time on women's clubs. They never have money, save for foreign humbugs or biennial luncheons at Astor or Waldorf. Cultivate the cocupation doctor and you will be busy.

"Let me tell you the latest. She came yesterday and is going in for the Japanesy." What drove you to Japane? I asked.

"I saw two panels at the Architectural League exhibit—snow and swinging trees and birds—fascinatingly poetical, ahe replied, and I said aloud. "If Locald only do something like that!"

""You can," said a wolce at my side.

"It was my doctor. I had been ill for a year and was just beginning to take interest in things, and I said to him, "I have always wanted to go to Japan."

""The next best thing," laughed the doctor, "is to get as near to it as you can on this side. You want something to do now that you are getting around; why not paint Japanese subjects?" You see he knew I had dabbled a little in water color.

""Let's see whose work this is." he said

GOWNS MADE IN BRUSSELS. That City Turns Out Quantities of "Paris Freeks."

"Do you know where many of the frocks are made that American women buy in Paris?" asked a man who has lived abroad for many years.

"In Brussels." he went on. about the greatest dressmaking centre of the world. I know one woman who has a dressmaking establishment in which she employs 600 girls. Her output is tremendous, and there are many similar etablishments.

"Every freight train that leaves Brussels for Paris carries big consignments of dresses. Labor is cheaper in Brussels than in Paris and conditions of living different. Then there is no Sunday holiday for the workers in millinery establishments. The proprietors are so establishments. The proprietors are so swamped with orders that they keep their hands going. Nothing is so tyrannical as the demand for dress. The saying over there is that the physician and the undertaker may take their own time, but the dressmaker never.

"My wife tells me that she can get in Brussels an exquisite hand embroidered gown for \$100, and the best turned out there—a court dress in fact with trainfor \$140. Brussels is fast becoming an American shopping centre."

Bird Builds Nest in Drawing Room From the London Daily Mail. A remarkable story of a blackbird's sage

A remarkable story of a blackbird's sega-city is sent by a correspondent from Dud-bridge, near Stroud. A nest of birds was given to Mr. Haden, but he liberated the female in the orchard.

She returned, however, and entered the house, finally building a nest in the draw-ing room. Each day the bird takes a short flight, but siways returns home for food and sleep. If the door is closed she flutters against the window until she is admitted.

